1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Bira FO11

[P.175-D]

BB 412

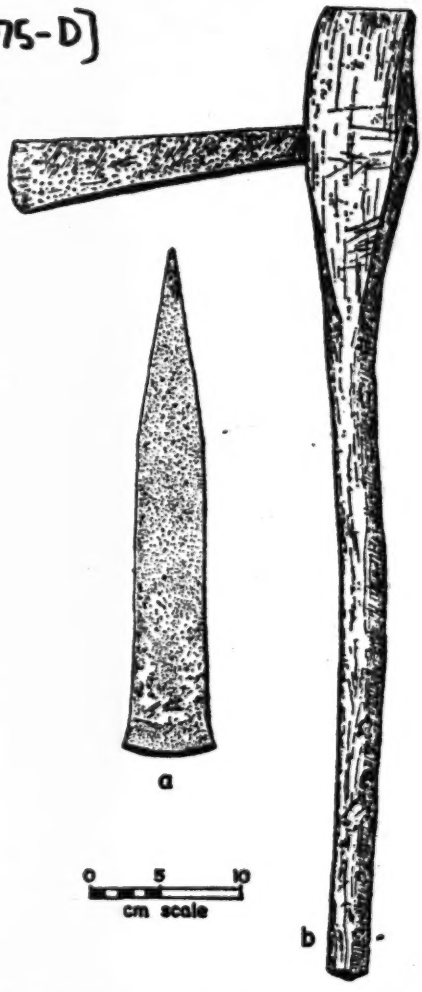

FIG. 14. Household utensils of metal, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Ax blade. A common gift made by villagers to Mbuti, nominally under their control, on the occasion of an Mbuti marriage. b. Ax, used by Mbuti mainly for the cutting of light saplings with which they make their house frames; Bira hafting.

BB [170] [571] [431].

[ARCHERS]

[P.180-C]

Marriage, however, is not necessarily preceded by a period of courtship. Schebesta (1952, 233) attests to the betrothal of infants by their parents but does not know how frequently these betrothals result in marriage. The ultimate essential is agreement between individuals and their respective lineages. The qualities in a man appreciated by a girl are courage, decision, prowess in the hunt, and ability in the dance. Her hunting band also appreciates these qualities and receives favorably any suitor who brings presents of game that he has killed, but it is said to be more interested in the suitor's band. There is no formal adult betrothal; the boy visits the girl's camp and spends some days there, giving her small presents. Her acceptance of the presents and reciprocation of his attentions constitute betrothal; it remains only to secure the agreement of the two bands and to overcome the obstacle of exchange price. If a youth fears that his prowess as a hunter or dancer is not sufficiently impressive to prove his manliness, he will resort to various love philters. Philters are also used by Mbuti girls.

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[581]

[431]

[832]

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not totally ineffective. Mbuti genealogical perspective is limited, to say the least, and from their point of view any allegiances formed by a deceased grandfather are of minimal significance, if indeed they are even remembered. In terms of kinship, neither man nor woman will be able to name their great-grandparents, nor may they even be able to name any brothers or sisters of their grandparents unless they have a vivid personal recollection of them. The only occasion on which it would be of any significance for them to know such details would be marriage, and there the parents of the youths concerned will have the necessary access to the (for them) parental, genealogical level by which the permissibility or otherwise of marriage is determined.

Thus the Mbuti can accept with perfect ease, and even with conviction, the villager notion of hereditary ownership. That is not to say that they acknowledge the obligations claimed by the villagers, but only that they recognize kinship as being the basis by which the villagers determine the relationship. An Mbuti who has only temporarily changed allegiance (and at this point I should make it clear that permanent changes are by no means taking place every day) may continue to respect his permanent allegiance, even to the point of sending his hereditary *kpara* occasional gifts of meat or honey. If he changes his allegiance permanently, however, it will be because of some major disagreement, rather than simply because of a temporary shift of residence on either side, and in that case all previous bonds are broken and the Mbuti will leave it up to the villagers to settle the matter between them.

In the belief that kinship is of as vital concern to the Mbuti as it is to themselves, and carries the same indissoluble obligations and rights, the villagers seek to reinforce their relationship with the Mbuti by bringing them as closely into the village kinship system as possible. This is sometimes done by direct intermarriage, a male villager taking an Mbuti wife, but never the reverse. In this case the offspring are considered in every respect as villagers, by both Mbuti and the villagers themselves, but the wife is still Mbuti, with relatives in the forest, and therefore in a good position to attract meat and honey. But it can be seen that it may also cause a further conflict of interest, as it will attract to the villager's household a number of Mbuti relatives who technically may owe allegiance to other villagers, yet who cannot be debarred from showing concern for their sister. In such a case the Mbuti relatives are entitled, and indeed expected, to

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wooden clappers used only for the accompaniment of honey songs, and started clapping them vigorously while singing. Masisi found the competition too strong, shrugged his shoulders, chased the women away and, taking a pair of *ngbengbe* himself, joined in the singing.

The next day the men and the older youths went honey gathering and brought back enough honey to send some as a gift to Cephu.

7. Laziness is highly criticized among the Mbuti, and is always related to hunger. It is one of the few qualities (noisy hunting is another, "blindness" in the honey season a third) that is countered by public assertion, in mime, dance and song, of the opposite value. One morning, shortly after dawn, there were murmurings of discontent because of the dampness of the forest, and suggestions that there was enough food in camp to allow for a day without hunting. One of the older hunter's wives stalked out into the center of the camp and began an elaborate wordless mime, showing that she was not going to be lazy and stay behind and play and dance "empty" games and dances. She was going to take her husband's spear and go off and hunt (she reenacted a successful hunt) and return with lots of food and share it all around and make her *roho* good and make the forest happy. Then when *she* sang and danced, it would not be empty.

It was a good show, and the whole camp looked on and laughed, then went hunting.

8. One morning, at the beginning of the honey season, a number of hunters set out, as usual, at scattered intervals. Several seemed to be staying behind, so I also remained. After about half an hour the hunters returned, one by one throwing their nets on the ground in the center of the camp. When they were all back, a bachelor youth who had gone with them began a tirade against the hunters who had stayed behind. Hearing his voice, and wondering why he was taking such a prominent part in a hunting issue, women began sleepily coming out of their huts. It was evident that too many had decided to stay home, and the hunt had not had enough beaters. The youth, Pepei, not only criticized the women as lazy animals for not coming on the hunt but also criticized the rest of the hunters, pointing out they had been even too lazy to send their sons with their nets, and had left people like himself, an orphaned youth, to do the work of men.

The hunters had nothing to say, but the women responded vigorously that they were not going to carry nets and spears for the men, they had work of their own to do, and that if enough youths had

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626 578 224 Cephu was neither a very good nor a very popular hunter, and it may be that he was afforded less cooperation by his fellow hunters as a result. Toward the end of a particularly unsuccessful day, Cephu 626 627 224 578 slipped off and set his net up where it would catch the first wave of animals put up by the beat. He was caught with his spoils, however, and when back in camp there was a gathering of all the youths and hunters and elders (except Moké) at the *kumamolimo* (hearth of the *molimo*), to which Cephu was summoned by calling his name across to the small camp he had built for himself. He was named in the most uncomplimentary terms, and when he finally came to defend himself he was subjected to indignities, even by the youths and children. He was openly accused of stealing food from his fellow Mbuti, and this was something only animals did (note that the anger was of the band at someone having stolen from the band; this to the Mbuti is true theft). All manner of other grievances were brought up [165] against Cephu, particularly his lack of participation in the *molimo* for Balekimito, Ekianga's mother, paternal aunt to Manyalibo and Masisi. Cephu responded that Balekimito was not his mother, and this was the trap into which he had been led. By saying this he disclaimed membership of the hearth, and so his theft became more logical but his act even more reprehensible. Finding himself now both a thief and an outsider, Cephu broke down and offered to return all the meat he had caught. The hunters went with him and stripped not only his hut but those of the three other families in Cephu's camp, leaving Cephu complaining that he would die.

That evening, however, Masisi slipped over in the dark with a peace offering of cooked food[4] and not long afterward Cephu made his way to the *kumamolimo* and joined in the singing for his "mother," Balekimito. This was one of the very rare occasions when a dispute was ended by what might be considered as direct retributive and punitive action by the band.

685 157 [424] 10. This is not to say that theft of food never takes place. It would be a rare Mbuti woman who did not conceal a portion of the catch in case she was forced to share with others, and occasionally a bachelor like Pepei, with a reputation for being somewhat *wazi-wazi*, was caught stealing a small quantity of food from a cooking pot or from

[431] [182] [4] Prestation is an important though unformalized part of Mbuti life, and a major means of establishing social relationships. Any property except the most personal items, such as used bark cloth, bows and spears, are likely to change hands, and even these personal items may be offered or sought.

someone's hut.[5] The woman would be roundly criticized, and maybe named. Pepei was either ridiculed or caught by other youths and given a mild thrashing with a thorny branch. But that did not stop Pepei, and at one time he was becoming such a nuisance that there was considerable discussion as to how to deal with him.

One morning a leg of meat was found missing from a rack where it had been smoked in readiness for a visit to the village. The owner of the rack had been one of Pepei's most outspoken critics, Makubasi, a son of old Tungana. Pepei, incidentally, was a discriminating thief, and he was generally tolerated because his thefts frequently operated as unofficial sanctions against people who had incurred public disapproval for some reason or another. However, Makubasi was a highly respected member of the band, and Pepei had overstepped himself by committing a theft that could not be construed as a mark of disapproval of some mild misdemeanor on someone else's part, but that was plainly an act of personal vengeance. Instead of thrashing him, Makubasi simply pulled down his meat rack, tumbling it into the fire below and burning it along with what was left of the meat. It was a dramatic gesture, and although his wife was seen to sneak some of the meat out of the fire before it was consumed, it was an effective move.

Makubasi's mother collected all the meat she and Tungana had, brought it over and threw it on the ground in front of Pepei's house, saying it was a gift for animals and insects, and for Pepei to eat it if he wanted. This was too much for Pepei, who started crying and saying how terrible it was to be an orphan. Everyone ignored him and for the rest of the day not a word was spoken to him. The meat lay rotting outside his hut, where it remained until consumed by animals and insects.

That evening, again at dark, a peace offering of cooked food was brought to Pepei by Sau, the old "witch" from whom he most frequently stole. Thus did Sau, like Masisi, restore harmony and *ekimi* (quiet) to the camp.

[5] The acknowledgment of theft as a crime might well be taken in support of Nippold's (1954) contention that, together with other hunters and gatherers, the African pygmies, and the Mbuti in particular, have a highly developed sense of private property. It is a debatable point, and largely a semantic problem, and if labored too much only obscures the essential structural fact that regardless of the extent to which property is "privately" owned (and if it is, where are any corresponding patterns, let alone laws, of inheritance?), the obligation to share is an important recognized value, recognized in practice (cf., constant reciprocal prestations). There is frequent show of reluctance, but

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or dry, with few real ups and downs that affect the life of the group as a whole.

Occasionally an elephant is killed, and that means the entire camp will be abandoned at once and a new one built around the dead animal, so that it can be eaten on the spot. The Pygmies point out that this is easier than bringing the elephant to the camp. It means a week of merry-making, of singing and dancing and no hunting. The only trouble is that it also means visits from the villagers. On such occasions they will pluck up their courage and venture into the forest, feeling that with such an abundance of meat the Pygmies will be in a generous frame of mind. The Pygmies try to avoid this by immediately sending meat to the village. But when villagers do come, they are generally courteously received and allowed to stay for a day or two. After that, if they are slow with gifts of rice or tobacco, the Pygmies have various ways of making them move on. The forest is the world of the Pygmy, and he is not bashful about telling a villager who outstays his welcome just what he thinks of him.

I stayed in one camp which was only a few hours from the village and on the way to a Negro fishing ground. We were constantly beset by villagers passing through, and after a while the Pygmies got tired of feeding them, tired of being used as a convenient stopping place. So when they were asked for food, the Pygmies would agree on condition that the villagers join them in a game of *panda*. This is a gambling game in which beans are thrown on a mat, or on a flat piece of ground. Some of them are quickly scooped up by one of the two players. The other, looking to see how many are left, has to estimate at a glance how many his opponent has taken. He then tells his opponent to throw down one, two, or three beans, or to stay as he is. The count is then made—also at a glance—and if the player has an exact multiple of four he wins. But against villagers Pygmies always win. For one thing they have an uncanny sense of